(SHRI H.K.L. BHAGAT); Madam, I am grateful to you for giving me this opportunity to reply to the debate on the working of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. This is a Ministry in the working of which hon. Member have always shown a lot of interest and it is very natural. They have made a number of points and my colleagues, Prof. K.K. Tewary and Shri Krishna Kumar, made their statements yesterday, they made very relevant points and answered certain points raised by hon. Members. I would not like to repeat the same points. Hon. Members, Shri Satya Prakash Malaviya, Shri Kapil Verma, Shri Mustafa Bin Quasem, Shri Raoof Valiullah, Shrimati Renuka Chowdhury, Shrimati Veena Verma Shri Pramod Mahajan, Shri V Gopalsamy, Shri Gurudas Das Gupta, Dr. Ratnakar Pandey, Shri Chitta Basu, Shrimati Bijoya Chakravarty, Shri Dharam Pal, Shri Ram Awadhesh Singh and Shri P. N. Sukul made a number of points.

I may agree with some of the points, I may not agree with some of the points. But I must say that the participation in the debate was quite enthusiastic and it does help me in understanding things. In the present atmosphere it is very difficult for anyone to be objective and in th is atmosphere of sharp poltical polarisation, one cannot easily expect people to be very objective. I am myself a political person. Therefore, many things which have been said do not come to me as a surprise. All the same I would like to do my best in all humilty and with respect and regard to the hon. Members, whelther on this side or on that side of the House, to make a presentation, what I think to be a correct presentation. Let me say from the beginning that in regard to the media requirements of India, nobody can say today, nobody will be able to say at any time, 'Well, everything is enough, nothing more: everything is good, nothing more'. Nobody Will ever,be able to claim that I do not claim that. According to my assessment, India is a picture of tremendous achievements and strong challenges. It is a picture of achievements and challenges. So is the media, When I talk of the media. I talk of all categories of madia whether it is TV, whether it is radio or print media or other categories of media. I believe that the media is a picture of tremendous achievements. It has very strong challenges before it, it has very strong responsibilities before it. That is the picture of the media. I would like to touch upon the various aspects of it. I would not merely like to pat myself or pat the Ministry by harping on the expansion of the hardware. Hardware is very important. But without the hardware we cannot give the software. Nobody can minimise the importance of the hardware.

It is a fact that in TV we have got the largest TV audience in the world in the shortest possible time. This nobody can deny. And, when we talk of the achievements of the Government, we should understand that they are the achievements of the nation. Ultimately, whatever has been achieved in India is the achievement of the various sections of the people—they are the engineers, they are the writers, they are the workers, they are the farmers, they are the teachers, they are the administrators, they are the public figures and so on. Whatever has been achieved, whatever we have achieved during the last forty years, or even during the last four or five years, are the achievements of the nation and I do not claim them as my achievements, but they are the achievements of the nation. In a democracy, the Government once elected for a certain period of time represents the country, and, therefore, it s natural that the Government is attacked and criticised and the Government also should answer. The Government get credit for the achievements and it is not that the Government does not get discredit

for anything which happens. It is not correct. The Government should always be prepared for both. Therefore, I would say that in the field of the media, one cannot say, as I have said, that you cannot have the software. The media is needed and nobody denies it. Media is needed more and more and nobody denies it.

I know that in the case of TV, we have got the largest possible audience within the shortest possible time and that is the comment of the world experts. Over the years we have been growing and we are going to grow much more. We have 335 transmitters, the rest is to be completed with the Seventh Plan schemes, 100 are not yet sanctioned, but are in the process of sanction, and with these, the number will become 523 and then the coverage will go up. This is not a small achievement. Coverage will go up to 83 per cent and if you take the border areas mostly tribal, it will go up to 36 per cent.

Now, so far as radio is concerned, we are today the second largest country in the world, and we have the second largest domestic radio network in the world, Amercia being the first and, after the Seventh Five Plan schemes are completed, ours will become the largest domestic radio network in the world. We will become the largest country in this respect. Therefore, while one should not merely gloat over the achievements in hardware expansion, one cannot certainly ignore them and not recognise this great achievements by this nation, by the people of India. After all, who made these transmitters ? It is the public sector units in India which have made these transmitters. Some of he parts, of course, are imported. But they are the people who have done it and it is our own people who have done it. And we cannot forget the former Prune Minister, Shrimati Indira Gandhis contribution to it and my friend, Shri Vasant Sathe's contribution to it and the contribution by all the people right from the engineers onwards. In a short period of time the whole thing was done and is being done. Therefore, as I said earlier, I will not merely concentrate on what we have achieved and I do not consider this achievement in the field of the media as my achievement or the achievement of this Government. This is the achievement of the whole nation and the people of India, which means you and myself and all of us. We shall all feel proud of it including you.

Everybody should feel proud of what we have achieved. *I* remember, when I went to the USA once the experts there were very sceptical and felt that we would not be able to achieve this. But, later on, their own papers wrote, within a period of a year and a half, the largest audience within the shortest possible time has come. should have some kind of a sense of pride about our achievements. They are not only my achievements, but they are also the achievements of my country and the pe°P[le] who run it. I would confine my self merely to the hardware part of it So far as the radio concerned, we are going to have FM local stations also. We have now come to a stage where, apart from the National one, even the regional and local stations we are going to nave. We are going to have long term oojective of 24 hour service on me radio then almost every hour you will have news and other things on the radio in some channels. So radio has gone far far ahead and yet we have to go far far ahead. We are trying to go in for some more high-power transmitters Whereby

[Shri H.K.L. Bhagat]

we can improve our news set-up in foreign countries also. We have improved our External Services on the radio and we have to improve them still more. So, as I said, no stage will arise in the history of India when one will say, 'Well, with India's dimensions and media requirements, you have achieved so much." At no stage will one be in a position to say that every thing has been achieved. No. I do not say that everything has been achieved. I only say . that much has been achieved and much more has to be achieved, that much has been improved and much more is to be improved. And the media can never afford to be stale, media can never afford to sit tight, and media has always to continuously keep on its legs and try to improve things. So, I say that the media has tremendously improved, and there is a tremendous scope for further improvement in various aspects of the media. I am deliberately not giving you the radio stations, the number of TV transmitters. I mentioned briefly.

Now I will touch upon the major points which were touched bymyhon. friends, whatever, their intention or motivation, political or otherwise, might be. But I cannot claim that I am not a political person. I would like to place my point of view rather candidly. Now, the software part of it is more important. In the software part of it also so far as the TV is concerned, so far as the radio is concerned, the first stage is that the J software part requires three or four things. One is that we should have equipment. If you do not have programmes production centre, if you do not have equipment, if you do not have camera, if you do not have recorders and musical instruments, if you do not have **the base, what** can **you do ?** The **first is that you have to have a centre, then yon have to have per**sonnel, you have to have artistes and specific need programme. If you see the programming part of it , there also we have very vastly improved. And I come to the news part of it, its projection also, and also the criticism that is made by various friends. I come to that part of it specifically and in this I would not merely satisfy myself by a mere jugglery of figures. But figures are also important. If some body makes a criticism that so and so Chief Minister is not being covered and if we find in actual reality that this is not correct and that the person is being covered well, his Government is being covered well, then the figures become relevant. I would say that all of us do not have the time to see all the news on the TV. Some of you might have, but I don't have. I must say that I cannot give much time. Even as a Minister, I can make that confession that I cannot give much time. I cannot claim that. I see everything that happens on the TV I see very, very little. And, therefore, I have to go by the impression, by the study, official and non-official by the comments made by you in Parliament and outside, and I form something which, I think, is necessary. I do see things, But what I am trying to observe is that sometimes figures also become important. Now, as far as the software part of it is concerned, in the media, a tremendous amount of improvement is made in their programme-making capacity and the number of programmes. I have got all the facts and figures with me. They have made a large number of programmes on social causes. And sports coverage has very much extensively increased. Of course, in both the media, cricket gets more time in the sense cricket matches take more time. The other kind of sports take less time. But still, progressively, the coverage of Indian sports, our own sports or **what we** call indigenous **sports**

has also increased. I Lave all the details of the programmes relating to women, relating to children. I have the total figures with me, in some cases even the titles of the programmes are with me. By this you will find that there has been a tremendous focus. Some friends have said : What is the purpose of this media ? Can there be two opinions ? The purpose of the media is to contribute to the social, economic and cultural regeneration of India. The purpose of the media is to help the people, to educate them, to inform them and to- entertain them. That is the purpose. On this, there are no two opinions. If somebody is going to tell me that the media is not educating the people, not informing the people—well, some people say that it is neither information nor education, nor entertainment—then, I would say it is passing **a** sort of judgement without any thought. One of my freinds, Mr. Pramod Mahajan, when we spoke yesterday, he was poetic. I must say that his speech was poetic, and he said that everything is nothing. During the last so many years, including the last four years, the media in this country has made a tremendous contribution to educate the people, to inform them and entertain them, and towards the social, cultural and economic reconstruction of the country. You have to go by the programmes which have actually been made. This is not to say that what they have done is enough. I would say that what we need is much more and even much better. I would straightway concede that. But to say that so much has been done, is totally wrong. Media has contributed a great deal to the development of agriculture. There have been a number of programmes on science and technology. I have with me the entire list, I can read before you. The number of programmes on children, I have with me. The **number of programmes on sports, education, health, sanitation, women. I have got these programmes and** the media has made a tremendous contribution to the programmes on freedom struggle, programmes en excellence, programmes on pilgrimage, programmes on tourism, including adventure tourism, programmes on humour, programmes on music, programmes on art and sculpture, and so on. All these things" are there before you and while one can say this is not all right, that is not all right, one can pick up not one fault, you might pick up one fault, I might be able to pick up five faults or half a dozen faults. But to say in totality thai the' media is useless, the media is only a propaganda organ of the ruling party and so on is absolutely far from the truth.

I will give my comments on news. I will give you the names of the people who come in news. I will tell you the names of people who come more in news. I will tell you the names of the people who really appear in current affairs discussion. Will you be able to point out to me that they are all Congress-men, pro-Congress people or pro-establishment people. That is far away from the truth. I have a list with me of the All India Radio. I have a list with me of the Doordarshan, where people have participated in discussions, current affairs, during the last six months. A large number of them are people who are known anti-Congress people. A large number of them are known as independents, objective thinkers and writers and to condemn the media as a whole is not the right thing to do. A large number of my friends sitting on the Opposition benches have appeared on the radio and the TV during the last six months, many of them have appeared and their leaders have appeared **and** they cannot deny. **I will name the programmes in which they have appeared and then to**

[Shri H.K.L. Bhagat]

say that the media is not doing justice to them is not right and fair, much lesser number of Congress-men have appeared on the media than others. We learn from criticism. Even your criticism yester-day made me a bit wiser, I must say that. Therefore, to condemn the! media as a whole and to say that the media is totally useless is absolutely far from the truth. Now some friends said, media is not Indian. Is media not Indian ? The music that we play, is it not Indian ? The serials that we depict, are they not Indian ? Only five or six per cent is probably the foreign content of the programmes. Are the tele-dramas not Indian ?

Now, one of my friends gave his own concept of, I think it was Mr. Quasim, secularism, and let me tell him that our concept of secularism is that we do not believe that the State has any religion. But we are not an anti-religion country or anti-religion society. We .are a multi-religion country and society. We think all the religions have equal rights, all the citizens, groups and so on. And we project the Indian culture, social, economic and cultural projection is Indian, We have projected social values and ethos. Here and there we might have committed some mistakes. Some projection might have been delayed here or there and so on. I would straightaway concede that. India's media is not what it needs. But in a short time it has been built up very well. We have to build it up more and more by encouraging it, not by discouraging it. Whom do you discourage by saying these things You can criticise me, you can condemn me. You can condemn the Government. But when you critwise and covitemn the achieve-ments of the media in season and out or season, whom are you ! condemning, condemning the people and condemning what is being done. Therefore, I would request you that you see these things from this angle.

Now, one friend says, hon. Mr. Gurupadaswamy said, I did not say this. Some Congress M.Ps. take that meaning and they give a statement, and that statement is telecast. Something wrong has been done. Now, it is question of interpretation. You say, you never meant anything. They say, you said something which meant this thing- Could be a difference of opinion. Therefore, I would say that from these things should you judge the media as a whole ? No. Do you think I write the news bulletins ? Do you think I have the time to interfere in these things or any Minister has the time to interfere in these things ? No. I am dealing with it but I do not have much time even to see it. Though I cannot see it but to the extent I can, I do.

We are a secular country. There are religions in this country, and we are not anti-religion ; we are not against religion and so on. But what we project is culture of India.

. Now, one hon. Member was saying that projection of Ramayana and Mahabharat and certain other serials is creating feelings of funda-mentalism and helping the com-munal forces. That is his own viewpoint. One is legitimately entitled to have this viewpoint. But with respect, I wish to submit.— this is not my view alone; that is the view of everybody— that Rama-yan and Mahabharat project the best values, moral values that this country has cherished, oyer which there are no two opinions. And they are being seen by whom ? Not only by Hindus, but by Muslims, by Sikhs/ by Christians, by 'tribals,

by all sections of the people, including Communists.

SHRI DIPEN GHOSH : (West Bengal) : I don't see.

SHRI H. K. L. BHAGAT You may not be seeing.....

SHRI DIPEN GHOSH : As you don't see T.V. because you said that very little you see, that means it is nothing, and' I dont see T.V. because..

SHRI H. K. L. BHAGAT : If I were to take, I am prepared to take a survey of your family, your home, not yours personally. I am talking of Ramayana and other programmes which are seen. I know my Muslim barber ; when he comes to my house, he at once sits and sees Mahabharat. Some people in Pakistan told me personally, when I went there with the Prime Minister, that they also see it. You are free to have your opinion. When I say is that the programmes which are shown on the T.V. generally—not only Mahabharat and Ramayana but other programmes also of Ghalib and programme on Amir Khusro are liked by people. We are going to have some other programmes, programmes which would project Indian culture which we are proud of, and all sections, all communities of people welcome these programmes. The proof of pudding lies in eating. You ask the people whether these programmes are not popular and whether they don't want them.

SHRI DIPEN GHOSH: Bombay films are vary popular.

SHRI H.K.L. BHAGAT ; Not only films, but all the other programmes Is the Discovery of India not popular and good? I can name a dozen and you cannot say no... .*(Interruptions).*

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : You listen to him.

SHRI H.K.L. BHAGAT: You have much lung power : I also have that: But I am talking of facts. If you disagree, you have the right to do so, but because these things have been said by your party colleague, I am saying it. It was probably Mr. Quasim who said it. Therefore, I am saying that our meaning of secularism is not that religion does not exist in India Religion does exist in India and we depict the culture of India.

Now, one thing was said yesterday. I think it was one of your collegues who said it. I will be very can did. His charge of partiality was that when Bharat-bandh was there, the media projected an atmosphere against Bharat-bandh. I think we did the very right thing we should have done. If we had not done that, we would have failed in doing the duty. If you resort to that kind of political Bharat-bandh, we believe in India marching forward : you believe in India collapsing. You want to finish the country : we want it to march forward. (*{Interruptions)*

SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY(Andhra Pradesh) : I object to it. It does not behove a man of your seniority to say like that. I am sorry. Then you should have shown Andhra legislators being caned. That was also part of your show __ *{Interruptions)*

SHRI DIPFN GHOSH : That is our criticism T.V. should not be only a Government of India Congress I—T.V. It is an official media,

[Shri Dipen Ghosh]

which means, it should be a media of the people of India.

SHRI H.K.L. BHAGAT : I agree with Mr. Dipen Ghosh that T.V. and media should belong to the nation, and it does belong to the nation.

SHRI DIPEN GHOSH : And that nation has opposition parties. As many as 11 States are ruled by opposition parties.

SHRI H.K.L. BHAGAT : Your Chief Minister Jyoti Basu is in fact the best covered Chief Minister of India.

SHRI DIPEN GHOSH : But your T.V. does not say that.. ***(Interruptions).***

1 P.M.

SHRI H.K.L. BHAGAT : Mr. Dipen Ghosh, please sit down. ***(Interruptions)***

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : Mr. Dipen Ghosh please sit down. The Minister is on his legs. You have made your viewpoints. Now, the Minister is replying. Do not interrupt him.

(Interruptions)

SHRI DIPEN GHOSH : I was patiently listening. In order to bring home his point, it is he who is provoking. I have not provoked him. I am listening.

SHRI H.K.L. BHAGAT : Mr. Ghosh, I have not provoked you. *(Interruptions)*

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : Yesterday, he has been provoked enough. There should not be any more provocations. *(Interruptions)*

SHRI DIPEN GHOSH : The hon. Minister has admitted that he sees very little television. This means he sees nothing in th television and he has got the right **to reply!**

(Interruptions)

what does 'little' mean? It mean 'nothing'. Prof. Tewari is here. What does 'very little' mean ? *(Interruptions)*

SHRI H.K.L.BHAGAT: Madam Deputy Chairman, if somebody plans stoppage of milk supply, if somebody plans stoppage of power, if somebody plans stoppage of foodprains production, if somebody plans stoppage of trains, is he not creating chaos? Should the media project chaos? No. We will never do that. *(Interruptions)*

SHRI MOTURU HANUMANTHA RAO (Andhra Pradesh) : Bbarat Bandh is part of India. ***(Interruptions)***

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : I would request hon. Members. We had a discussion the whole day yesterday. You all have made your points. He is replying to the discussion. Why do you mind it? ***(Interruptions)***

SHRI DIPEN GHOSH : Yesterday, I was wondering. But after hearing him, I have come to know why TV is called idiot-box. ***(Interruptions)***

SHRI MOTURU HANUMANTHA RAO : Madam, let him prove **that** is he not partisan. *(Interruptions)*

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (PROF. K.K. TEWARI) : It is because of your repeated appearance on the television that it is called that. *(Interruptions)*

SHRIMATIRENUKA CHOWDHURI : Madam, let me remind the hon. Minister about one thing. They consider themselves to be self-righteous and as if they have the patent on patriotism. God save the nation . Let me remind him how the Defamation Bill was sneake into **the** House **and about the**

patiently supine manner in which it was withdrawn. This is only a reflection of the times and the kind of reply that is being given. Please do apply your mind. *{Interruptions)*

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : Please do not interrupt the hon. Minister. *(Interruptions).*

SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY: This Defamation Bill was a noose on the democratic system. They had to withdraw it because the people revolted against it. *{Interruptions).* Let me remind them that we are as patriotic as they are. *(Interruptions)*

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : In any case, we have to adjourn for lunch now. Later on, I will look into the records.

SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY: Madam, I have not said anything unparliamentary or objectionable. *(Interruptions)*

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : The house is now adjourned for lunch till 2 30 P.M.

The House then adjourned for lunch at three minutes past one of the clock.

The House reassembled after lunch at thirty-five minutes past two of the clock, The Vice-Chairman 'Shri Jagesh Desai) in the Chair.

ANNOUNCEMENT RE. GOVERNMENT BUSINESS DURING THE REMAINING PART OF THE CURRENT SESSION

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI RADHAKRISHAN MALAVIYA) : With your permission, Sir, I rise to announce that Government Business in this House during the remaining part of the current Session will consist of: —

(1) Consideration and passing of the Constitution (Sixty-first Amendment) Bill, 1988.

(2) Consideration and return of the Finance Bill, 1989, as passed by Lok Sabha.

(3) Discussion on the resolution seeking approval of the House for extension of President's Rule in Punjab.

(4) Consideration and passing return of the following Bills passed by Lok Sabha: —

(a) The Terrorist and Disru tive Activities (Prevent ion) Amendment Bill, 1989.

(b) The Chandigarh Disturbed Areas (Amendment) Bill, 1989.

(c) The Appropriation (Railways) No. 3 Bill, 1989.

(d) The Railways Bill, 1989.

(e) The Appropriation (No- 3) Bill, 1989.

(f) The Union Duties of Excise (Distribution) Amendment Bill, 1989.

(g) The Additional Duties of Excise (Goods of Special Importance) Amendment Bill, 1989.

(h) The Representation of the People (Amendment) Bill, 1989.

(i) The Constitution (Sixty-third Amendment) Bill, 1989.

(5) Consideration and passing of the Assam University Bill, 1989.

RESOLUTION RE. STEPS TO START DEMOCRATIC PROCESS AND BRING AN END TO PRESENT SITUATION IN PUNJAB

SARDAR JAGJIT SINGH AURORA (Punjab): Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, I beg to move the following Resolution:—

> "Having regard to the fact that the situation in Punjab is continuously deteriorating and there is an urgent need to bring about normalcy there, this House is of opinion that it is imperative to effect basic changes in the present policy and priorities in relation thereto and, accordingly, recommends to Government to hold wide ranging discussions with all political parties at the national level with a view to evolving a meaningful plan to start democratic process in the State and to bring to an end the present situation."

Sir, at the outset I would like to mention that this Resolution is somewhat at variance with the Resolution that I had personally suggested. . .*(Interruptions)*... Sir. I have said that the House expresses its concern at the continued deterioration of the situation in Punjab in the two years of the President's rule; to bring about normalcy there is a need to carry out basic changes in the present policy and practices; this House recommends that wide-ranging discussions should be held at the national level with all political parties to evolve a meaningful plan to start democratic processes in the State and end the preseat Police raj. Sir, I shall not quibble about the change and I accept the resolution read first Now I wish to make a few introductory remarks.

The ever-increasing violence and turmoil in Punjab since 1982 has cieated a sense of concern and foreboding in the entire country. The geo-political importance of this State greatly adds to this concern. I feel that the concept of Khalistan has been bandied about so extensively in the press and the electronic media that it has made it virtually impossible to analyze this problem rationally and objectively. And our none-too-friendly relations with Pakistan and Pakistan's active, covert support to the terrorists has further clouded our perceptions.

I suggest, we may consider this problem under the following terms. First, whether the fear about the threat to the integrity of the country is well-founded. Next, did the demand for Khalistan ever have the support of the majority of the Sikhs in India or is it just the creation of a few romantic and fundamentalist or unscrupulous leaders? Has the Government handled this vital issue with a sense of responsible sensitivity and objective competence or subordinated it to subserve the partisan political ends ? Lastly, can and how should this seemingly intractable situation be resolved now?

Rightly or wrongly the Sikhs feel that both Mahatma Gandhi and [Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru had promised them a special status in the Punjab, which the Government did not honour. They had to agitate for it time and again and till today they have not had a fair deal. This really is the bedrock of the problem.

Since independence there is a long history of confrontation between the Akali Party and the Central Government i.e. the Congress party for political power in the Punjab. Whenever the Akali Party came into power, which was normally with the